

## Message Text

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ACTION EA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-03 H-01 INR-07 L-02

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

USIA-06 IO-10 AID-05 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 /082 W

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R 230640Z JAN 75

FM AMEMBASSY MANILA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 51

C O N F I D E N T I A L MANILA 1007

E O 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, SOCI, RP

SUBJ: CHURCH-STATE RELATIONS: MORE ON REFERENDUM BOYCOTT ISSUE

REF: MANILA 913

1. FR. PACIFICO ORTIZ, S.J., FORMER CONCON DELEGATE AND FOCAL POINT WITHIN CMLC (CHURCH-MILITARY LIAISON COMMITTEE) CHURCH DELEGATION, TREATED AN EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP BREAK-FAST CLUB JANUARY 23 STO FRANK ACCOUNT OF CATHOLIC LIBERAL WING VIEW OF COMING REFERENDUM. LABATT INVITED TO ATTEND. EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP GROUP INCLUDES REPRESENTATIVES OF BUSINESS, GOVERNMENT, AND MEDIA AS WELL AS ECUMENICAL LEADERS. THIS NEW ORGANIZATION HAD ARCHBISHOP SIN AS INAUGURAL SPEAKER JANUARY 9. HIGHLIGHTS OF ORTIZ. REMARKS FOLLOW.

2. REFERENDUM BOYCOTT MANIFESTO (MANILA 766) ISSUED BY MINDANAO/SULU NASSA SOCIAL ACTION DELEGATES (INCLUDING BISHOPS CLAVER, VARELA, AND NEPOMUCENO) DID NOT REPRESENT POSITION CHURCH AS WHOLE. CATHOLIC BISHOPS HAD NOT YET ADDRESSED THEMSELVES TO REFERENDUM ISSUE, ALTHOUGH TOPIC CERTAIN BE DISCUSSED AT LEAST INFORMALLY DURING COMING CBCP MEETING JANUARY 27-31. MANIFESTO IN EFFECT REPRESENTED VIEWS THOSE WHO BELIEVE FEBRUARY 27 REFERENDUM UNDER MARTIAL LAW AND CLIMATE OF FEAR WAS MEANINGLESS.

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THEREFORE, THEIR CONSCIENCE AND MORAL CONVICTION DICTATED

NON-PARTICIPATION IN REFERENDUM.

3. PRESIDENT HAD SAID HE WELCOMED OPEN CONSULTATION ON REFERENDUM QUESTIONS AND EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS DURING TWO-WEEK (FEBRUARY 7-21) FREE DISCUSSION PERIOD. IF HE (ORTIZ) UNDERSTOOD SPIRIT BEHIND THIS DECLARATION, AUTHORITIES WOULD BE LENIENT IN APPLYING ANNOUNCED LEGAL PENALTIES FOR NON-VOTERS. IF NATIONS' WOUNDS WERE TO BE HEALED, IT DUTY CONCERNED CITIZENS SPEAK OUT REFERENDUM ISSUES AS THEY SAW THEM. NATIONAL UNITY COULD NOT BE ACHIEVED BY IGNORING SENSITIVE POLITICAL PROBLEMS.

4. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH ORTIZ DID NOT IDENTIFY HIMSELF AS MEMBER CHURCH'S LIBERAL WING, IT QUITE OBVIOUS HE SHARED THEIR VIEWS. AS MATTER FACT, BOTH HE AND REV. GEORGE F. CASTRO (CHAIRMAN, NATIONAL COUNCIL OF CHURCHES AND MOVING FORCE BEHIND EXECUTIVE FELLOWSHIP GROUP) ALONG WITH 97 OTHER PRIESTS, PASTORS, CIVIC LEADERS AND LAY-MEN, SIGNED RECENT MANILA AREA ECUMENICAL MANIFESTO CALLING FOR LIFTING MARTIAL LAW "ALONG WITH ITS REPRESENTATIONS" IF REFERENDUM TO BE "MEANINGFUL AND CREDIBLE." SULLIVAN

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